

### REMARKS

By this amendment, claim 18 has been amended, and claims 22 and 23 have been added. Thus, claims 1-16 and 18-23 are now active in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

Initially, applicants and their undersigned attorney wish to thank Examiner Duong for the very helpful and courteous personal interview granted on December 13, 2005.

In the interview, the merits of independent of claim 1 were discussed with respect to the prior art of record, and after such discussion, the Examiner indicated that claim 1 appears to define over the prior art of record. In addition, the merits of claim 18 were discussed with respect to the prior art of record, and the Examiner indicated that a revised version of claim 18 (i.e. the amended version set forth above) also appears to define over the prior art of record.

The discussion regarding claims 1 and 18 will now be briefly summarized.

Regarding claim 1, it was pointed out to the Examiner that claim 1 requires that the gas blow device of the present invention (element 13 in the drawing figures) is provided below the fluidized medium discharge chute (i.e. 20 in the drawing figures) for blowing a gas into the medium-discharge end of the fluidized medium discharge chute 20 toward the medium-receiving end of the fluidized medium discharge chute 20. It was pointed out that, contrary to the this language of claim 1, the device shown in Fig. 2 of the Maeda patent (U.S. 4,886,246) shows a gas blow device 3 which blows gas into a chamber defined below the distributor 6 so that the gas will feed upwardly through the opening 6a of the distributor to thereby provide for fluidization of the fluidized medium of the fluidized bed portion 7b, but that the gas blown into the chamber defined below the distributor 6 does not enter into the medium-discharge end of the fluidized medium discharge chute (which the Examiner had defined as the distributor 6). More specifically, it was noted that the fluidized medium 7a is discharged from the funnel-shaped distributor 6 via the discharge chute 4, but the discharge chute 4 does not open into the chamber defined below the distributor 6 and, rather, has its medium-discharge end outside of the furnace F2, and thus that the reducing gas from the gas blow device 3 cannot enter into the medium-

discharge end of the discharge chute, as required by claim 1. The Examiner agreed that this feature of claim 1 is therefore not shown in the Maeda reference.

Regarding claim 18, the Examiner was presented with the revised version of claim 18 as set forth above, and it was pointed out to the Examiner that the gas blow device 65 of Vidt is located at the medium-discharge end (left end in the drawing figure) of the fluidized medium withdrawing device of Vidt, contrary to the requirement of amended claim 18 that the gas blow device is located in the vicinity of the medium-receiving end of the fluidized medium withdrawing device and below the fluidized medium withdrawing device, as can be seen in the drawing figures of the present application. In this regard, reference is made, for example, to Fig. 3 of the present application which shows the present fluidized medium withdrawing device as being the device below the gasification furnace 101 and to the left of the label "M". Reference is further made to page 13, lines 16-21 of the present specification as well as lines 15 and 16 of page 9 of the present specification which make clear that the gasification furnace 101 shown in Fig. 3 has the structure shown in Figs. 1A-1C or Figs. 2A-2C, and that the medium discharge device unit is provided at the lower part of the gasification furnace 101.

Thus, in view of the above amendments to claim 18 requiring the gas blow device to be located in the vicinity of the medium-receiving end of the fluidized medium withdrawing device and below the fluidized medium withdrawing device, contrary to the structure of the Vidt patent, the Examiner agreed in the personal interview that this amended claim 18 defines over the prior art of record.

Thus, for the above reasons, it is believed apparent that claims 1 and 18 clearly define over the prior art of record and, accordingly, that claims 1 and 18, as well as the claims depending therefrom, are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

The Examiner's attention is also directed to the new dependent claims 22 and 23. Claim 22 depend from claim 18 and further specifies that the gas blow device of claim 18 (i.e. element 14 in Figs. 1A, 1C, 2A and 2C) is located below the fluidized medium withdrawing device 15 at

a position opposite the fluidized discharge chute such that the gas blow device 14 is arranged to blow the gas into the fluidized medium discharge chute 20.


Claim 23 depends from claim 1 and further specifies that the medium-discharge end of the fluidized medium discharge chute 20 is disposed below an entirety of the fluidized bed floor portion of the fluidized bed portion 8.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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